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FRANCIS HIGGINSON
NEW-ENGLANDS
PLANTATION

1630



NUMBER 256

THE ENGLISH EXPERIENCE

ITS RECORD IN EARLY PRINTED BOOKS
PUBLISHED IN FACSIMILE



FRANCIS HIGGINSON
NEW-ENGLANDS
PLANTATION

1630

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NEVV-ENGLANDS PLANTATION.

OR,
A SHORT AND TRVE
DESCRIPTION OF THE
COMMODITIES AND
DISCOMMODITIES
of that Countrey.

Written by a reuerend Diuine now
there resident.



LONDON,
Printed by T.C. and R.C. for *Michael Sparke,*
dwelling at the Signe of the *Blew Bible* in
Greene Arbor in the little *Old Bailey.*

1630.

NEW ENGLANDS
PLANTATION

OR
A SHORT AND TRUE
DESCRIPTION OF THE
COMMODITIES AND
DISCOMMODITIES
OF THE

Written by a learned Englishman
and a Native



Printed by T. and J. L. for M. B. S. 1704
London



To the Reader.

REader, doe not disdain to read this Relation; and looke not here to haue a large Gate and no building within; a full-stuffed Title with no matter in the Booke: But here reade the truth, and that thou shalt find without any frothy bum-basted words, or any quaint new-devised additions, onely as it was written (not intended for the Presse) by a reuerend Diuine now there liuing, who onely sent it to some Friends here, which were desirous of his Relations; which is an Epitomy of their proceedings in the Plantation. And for thy part if thou meanest to be no Planter nor Venturer, doe but lend thy good Prayers for the furthrance of it. And so I rest a well-wisher to all the good designs both of them which are gone, and of them that are to goe.

M. S.



NEW-ENGLANDS PLANTATION.

Letting passe our Voyage by Sea, we will now begin our discourse on the shore of *New-England*. And because the life and wel-fare of euerie Creature here below, and the commodiousnesie of the Countrey

whereas such Creatures liue, doth by the most wise ordering of Gods providence, depend next vnto himselfe, vpon the temperature and disposition of the foure Elements, Earth, Water, Aire and Fire (For as of the mixture of all these, all sublunarie things are composed; so by the more or lesse inioyment of the wholesome temper and conuenient vse of these, consisteth the onely well-being both of Man and Beast in a more or lesse comfortable measure in all Countreys vnder the Heanens) Therefore I will endeauour to shew you what *New-England* is by the consideration of each of these apart, and truely endeauour by Gods helpe to report nothing but the naked truth, and that both to tell you of the discommodities as well as of the commodities, though as

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the idle Prouerbe is, *Trauellers may lye by authoritie*, and so may take too much sinfull libertie that way. Yet I may say of my selfe as once *Nehemiah* did in another case: *Shall such a Man as I lye?* No verily: It becommeth not a Preacher of Truth to be a Writer of Falshood in any degree: and therefore I haue beene carefull to report nothing of *New-England* but what I haue partly seene with mine owne Eyes, and partly heard and enquired from the Mouthes of verie honest and religious person, who by liuing in the Countrey a good space of time haue had experience and knowledge of the state thereof, & whose testimonies I doe beleeeue as my selfe.

First therefore of the Earth of *New-England* and all the appurtenances thereof. It is a Land of diuers and sundry sorts all about *Masachusetts Bay*, and at *Charles Riuer* is as fat blacke Earth as can be seene any where: and in other places you haue a clay soyle, in other grauell, in other sandy, as it is all about our Plantation at *Salem*, for so our Towne is now named, *Psal. 76.2.*

The forme of the Earth here in the superficies of it is neither too flat in the plainnesse, nor too high in Hills, but partakes of both in a mediocritie, and fit for Pasture, or for Plow or Meddow ground, as Men please to employ it: though all the Countrey be as it were a thicke Wood for the generall, yet in diuers places there is much ground cleared by the *Indians*, and especially about the Plantation-
and

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and I am told that about three miles from vs a Man may stand on a little hilly place and see diuers thousands of acres of ground as good as need to be, and not a Tree in the same. It is thought here is good Clay to make Bricke and Tyles and Earthen-Pots as needs to be. At this instant we are setting a Bricke-Kill on worke to make Bricks and Tyles for the building of our Houses. For Stone, here is plentie of Slates at the Ile of Slate in *Masachusetts* Bay, and Lime-stone, Free-stone, and Smooth-stone, and Iron-stone, and Marble-stone also in such store, that we haue great Rockes of it, and a Harbour hard by. Our Plantation is from thence called Marble-harbour.

Of Minerals there hath yet beene but little trial made, yet we are not without great hope of being furnished in that Soyle.

The fertilitie of the Soyle is to be admired at, as appeareth in the abundance of Grasse that groweth euerie where both verie thicke, verie long, and verie high in diuers places: but it groweth very wildly with a great stalke and a broad and ranker blade, because it neuer had been eaten with Cattle, nor mowed with a Sythe, and seldome trampled on by foot. It is scarce to be beleueed how our Kine and Goats, Horses and Hogges doe thriue and prosper here and like well of this Countrey.

In our Plantation we haue already a quart of Milke for a penny: but the abundant encrease of Corne proues this Countrey to be

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a wonderment. Thirtie, fortie, fiftie, sixtie are ordinarie here: yea *Iosephs* encrease in *Egypt* is out-strip here with vs. Our Planters hope to haue more then a hundred fould this yere: and all this while I am within compasse; what will you say of two hundred fould and vpwards? It is almost incredible what great gaine some of our English Planters haue had by our Indian Corne. Credible persons haue assured me, and the partie himselfe auouched the truth of it to me, that of the setting of 13 Gallons of Corne he hath had encrease of it 52 Hogsheads, euerie Hogshead holding seuen Bushels of *London* measure, and euerie Bushell was by him sold and trusted to the *Indians* for so much Beauer as was worth 18 shillings; and so of this 13 Gallons of Corne which was worth 6 shillings 8 pence, he made about 327 pounds of it the yeere following, as by reckoning will appeare: where you may see how God blesteth husbandry in this Land. There is not such great and beautifull eares of Corne I suppose any where else to be found but in this Countrey: being also of varietie of colours, as red, blew and yellow, &c. and of one Corne there springeth foure or fue hundred. I haue sent you many Eares of diuers colours that you might see the truth of it.

Little Children here by setting of Corne may earne much more then their owne maintenance.

They haue tryed our *English* Corne at new *Plimouth* Plantation, so that all our feuerall Graines

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Graines will grow here verie well, and haue a fitting Soyle for their nature.

Our Gouvernour hath store of greene Pease growing in his Garden as good as euer I eat in *England*.

This Countrey aboundeth naturally with store of Roots of great varietie and good to eat. Our Turnips, Parsnips and Carrots are here both bigger and sweeter then is ordinarily to be found in *England*. Here are also store of Pumpions, Cowcumbers, and other things of that nature which I know not. Also, diuers excellent Pot-herbs grow abundantly among the Grasse, as Strawberrie leaues in all places of the Countrey, and plentie of Strawberries in their time, and Penyroyall, Wintersfauerie, Sorrell, Brookelime, Liuerwort, Caruell and Watercreffes, also Leekes and Onions are ordinarie, and diuers Physicall Herbes. Here are also aboundance of other sweet Herbes delightfulfull to the smell, whose names we know not, &c. and plentie of single Damaske Roses verie sweet; and two kinds of Herbes that beare two kind of Flowers very sweet, which they say, are as good to make Cordage or Cloath as any Hempe or Flaxe we haue.

Excellent Vines are here vp and downe in the Woods. Our Gouvernour hath already planted a Vineyard with great hope of encrease.

Also, Mulberies, Plums, Raspberies, Corrance, Chesnuts, Filberds, Walnuts, Smalnuts, Hurtleberies & Hawes of Whitethorne neere

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as good as our Cherries in *England*, they grow in plentie here.

For Wood there is no better in the World I thinke, here being foure sorts of Oke differing both in the Leafe, Timber, and Colour, all excellent good. There is also good Ash, Elme, Willow, Birch, Beech, Saxafras, Iuniper Cipres, Cedar, Spruce, Pines & Firre that will yeeld abundance of Turpentine, Pitch, Tarre, Mafts and other materials for building both of Ships and Houses. Also here are store of Sumacke Trees, they are good for dying and tanning of Leather, likewise such Trees yeeld a precious Gum called White Beniamen, that they say is excellent for perfumes. Also here be diuers Roots and Berries wherewith the *Indians* dye excellent holyday colours that no raine nor washing can alter. Also, wee haue materials to make Sope-Ashes and Salt-Peter in abundance.

For Beasts there are some Beares, and they say some Lyons also; for they haue been seen at Cape *Anne*. Also here are seuerall sorts of Deere, some whereof bring three or foure young ones at once, which is not ordinarie in *England*. Also Wolues, Foxes, Beauers, Otters, Martins, great wild Cats, & a great Beast called a Molke as bigge as an Oxe. I haue seen the Skins of all these Beasts since I came to this Plantation excepting Lyons. Also here are great store of Squerrels, some greater, and some smaller and lesser: there are some of the lesser sort, they tell me, that by a certaine Skin
will

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will fly from Tree to Tree though they stand
farre distant.

*Of the waters of New-England with the things
belonging to the same.*

N*ew-England* hath Water enough both
salt and fresh, the greatest Sea in the
World, the *Atlanticke* Sea runs all along the
Coast thereof. There are abundance of Islands
along the Shore, some full of Wood and Mast
to feed Swine; and others cleere of Wood,
and fruitfull to beare Corne. Also we haue
store of excellent harbours for Ships, as at
Cape Anne, and at *Masathulets* Bay, and at
Salem, and at many other places: and they are
the better because for Strangers there is a ve-
rie difficult and dangerous passage into them,
but vnto such as are well acquainted with
them, they are easie and safe enough. The
abundance of Sea-Fish are almost beyond
beleeuing, and sure I should scarce haue belee-
ued it except I had seene it with mine owne
Eyes. I saw great store of Whales, and
Crampusse, and such abundance of Make-
rils that it would astonish one to behold, like-
wise Cod-Fish abundance on the Coast, and
in their season, are plentifully taken. There is a
Fish called a Basse, a most sweet & wholesome
Fish as euer I did eat, it is altogether as good
as our fresh Sammon, and the season of their
comming was begun when we came first to
New-England in *June*, and so continued about
thrice

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three months space. Of this Fish our Fishers take many hundreds together, which I haue seene lying on the shore to my admiration; yea, their Nets ordinarily take more then they are able to hale to Land, and for want of Boats and Men they are constrained to let a many goe after they haue taken them, and yet sometimes they fill two Boats at a time with them. And besides Basses we take plentie of Scate and Thornbacke, and abundance of Lobsters, that the least Boy in the Plantation may both catch and eat what he wil of them. For my owne part I was soone cloyed with them, they were so great, and fat, and lussious. I haue seene some my selfe that haue weighed 16 pound, but others haue had diuers time so great Lobsters as haue weighed 25 pound, as they assured me. Also here is abundance of Herring, Turbut, Sturgeon, Cuskes, Hadocks, Mulletts, Eeles, Crabs, Muskles and Oysters. Beside there is probabilitie that the Countrey is of an excellent temper for the making of Salt: for since our comming our Fishermen haue brought home verie good Salt which they found candied by the standing of the Sea water and the heat of the Sunne, vpon a Rock by the Sea shore: and in diuers Salt Marishes that some haue gone through, they haue found some Salt in some places crushing vnder their Feet and cleauing to their Shoes.

And as for fresh Water the Countrey is full of daintie Springs, and some great Riuers, and some lesser Brookes; and at *Masathulets* Bay they

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they digged Wels and found Water at three Foot deepe in most places : and neere *Salem* they haue as fine cleare Water as we can desire, and we may digge Wels and find Water where we list.

Thus we see both Land and Sea abound with store of blessings for the comfortable sustenance of Mans life in *New-England*.

*Of the Aire of New-England with the Temper
and Creatures in it.*

THe Temper of the Aire of *New-England* is one speciall thing that commends this place. Experience doth manifest that there is hardly a more healthfull place to be found in the World that agreeth better with our English Bodyes. Many that haue beene weake and sickly in old *England*, by comming hither hane beene thoroughly healed and growne healthfull and strong. For here is an extraordinarie cleere and dry Aire that is of a most healing nature to all such as are of a Cold, Melancholy, Flegmatick, Reumaticke temper of Body. None can more truly speake hereof by their owne experience then my selfe. My Friends that knew me can well tell how verie sickly I haue been and continually in Physick, being much troubled with a tormenting paine through an extraordinarie weaknesse of my Stomacke, and abundance of Melancholicke humors; but since I came hither on this Voyage, I thanke God I haue had perfect health,
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and freed from paine and vomitings, hauing a Stomacke to digest the hardest and coursest fare who before could not eat finest meat; and whereas my Stomacke could onely digest and did require such drinke as was both strong and stale, now I can and doe oftentimes drink *New-England* water verie well; and I that haue not gone without a Cap for many yeeres together, neither durst leaue off the same, haue now cast away my Cap, and doe weare none at all in the day time: and whereas before-time I cloathed my selfe with double cloathes and thicke Waistcoats to keepe me warme, euen in the Summer time, I doe now goe as thin clad as any, onely wearing a light Stuffe Callocke vpon my Shirt and Stuffe Breeches of one thicknesse without Linings. Besides, I haue one of my Children that was formerly most lamentably handled with sore breaking out of both his hands and feet of the Kings-Euill, but since he came hither he is verie well ouer hee was, and there is hope of perfect recouerie shortly, euen by the verie wholesomenesse of the Aire, altering, digesting and drying vp the cold and crude humors of the Body: and therefore I thinke it is a wise course for all cold complections to come to take Physicke in *New-England*: for a sup of *New-Englands* Aire is better then a whole draft of old *Englands* Ale.

In the Summer time in the midst of *July* and *August*, it is a good deale hotter then in old *England*: and in Winter, *January* and *February* are

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are much colder as they say: but the Spring and Autumne are of a middle temper.

Fowles of the Aire are plentifull here, and of all sorts as we haue in *England* as farre as I can learne, and a great many of strange Fowles which we know not. Whilst I was writing these things, one of our Men brought home an Eagle which he had killed in the Wood: they say they are good meat. Also here are many kinds of excellent Hawkes, both Sea Hawkes and Land Hawkes: and my selfe walking in the Woods with another in company, sprung a Partridge so bigge that through the heauinessse of his Body could fly but a little way: they that haue killed them, say they are as bigge as our Hens. Here are likewise abundance of Turkies often killed in the Woods, farre greater then our English Turkies, and exceeding fat, sweet and fleshy, for here they haue abundance of feeding all the yeere long, as Strawberries, in Summer all places are full of them, and all manner of Berries and Fruits. In the Winter time I haue seene Flockes of Pidgeons, and haue eaten of them: they doe flye from Tree to Tree as other Birds doe, which our Pidgeons will not doe in *England*: they are of all colours as ours are, but their wings and tayles are farr longer, and therefore it is likely they fly swifter to escape the terrible Hawkes in this Countrey. In Winter time this Countrey doth abound with wild Geese, wild Duckes, and other Sea Fowle, that a great part of winter the Planters

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haue eaten nothing but roastmeat of diuers Fowles which they haue killed.

Thus you haue heard of the Earth, Water and Aire of *New-England*, now it may be you expect something to be said of the Fire proportionable to the rest of the Elements.

Indeed I thinke *New England* may boast of this Element more then of all the rest : for though it be here something cold in the winter, yet here we haue plentie of Fire to warme vs, and that a great deale cheaper then they sell Billets and Faggots in *London* : nay, all *Europe* is not able to afford to make so great Fires as *New-England*. A poore Seruant here that is to possesse but 50 Acres of Land, may afford to giue more wood for Timber and Fire as good as the world yeelds, then many Noble Men in *England* can afford to doe. Here is good liuing for those that loue good Fires. And although *New-England* haue no Tallow to make Candles of, yet by the abundance of the Fish thereof, it can afford Oyle for Lampes. Yea our Pine-Trees that are the most plentiful of all wood, doth allow vs plentie of Candles, which are verie vsfull in a House: and they are such Candles as the *Indians* commonly vse, hauing no other, and they are nothing else but the wood of the Pine Tree clouen in two litle slices something thin, which are so full of the moysture of Turpentine and Pitch, that they burne as cleere as a Torch. I haue sent you some of them that you may see the experience of them.

Thus

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Thus of *New Englands* commodities, now I will tell you of some discommodities that are here to be found.

First, In the Summer season for these three months *June, Iuly* and *August*, we are troubled much with little Flyes called Musketoes, being the same they are troubled with in *Lincolnshiere* and the Fens: and they are nothing but Gnats, which except they be smoked out of their Howses are troublesome in the night season.

Secondly, In the Winter season for two months space the Earth is commonly couered with Snow, which is accompanied with sharp biting Frosts, something more sharpe then is in old *England*, and therefore are forced to make great Fires.

Thirdly, This Countrey being verie full of Woods and Wildernesses, doth also much abound with Snakes and Serpents of strange colours and huge greatnesse: yea there are some Serpents called Rattle Snakes, that haue Rattles in their Tayles that will not flye from a Man as others will, but will flye vpon him and sting him so mortally, that he will dye within a quarter of an houre after, except the partie stinged haue about him some of the root of an Hearbe called Snake weed to bite on, and then he shall receiue no harme: but yet seldome falles it out that any hurt is done by these. About three yeeres since an *Indian* was stung to death by one of them, but we heard of none since that time.

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Fourthly and lastly, Here wants as yet the good company of honest Christians to bring with them Horses, Kine and Sheepe to make vse of this fruitfull Land: great pittie it is to see so much good ground for Corne and for Grasse as any is vnder the Heauens, to lye altogether vnoccupied, when so many honest Men & their Families in old *England* through the populousnesse thereof, do make very hard shift to liue one by the other.

Now, thus you know what *New-England* is, as also with the commodities and discommodities thereof: now I will shew you a little of the Inhabitants thereof, and their gouernment.

For their Gouvernours they haue Kings, which they call *Saggamores*, some greater, and some lesser, according to the number of their Subiects.

The greatest *Saggamores* about vs can not make aboue three hundred Men, and other lesse *Saggamores* haue not aboue fifteene Subiects, and others neere about vs but two.

Their Subiects about twelue yeeres since were swept away by a great and gricuous Plague that was amongst them, so that there are verie few left to inhabite the Countrey.

The *Indians* are not able to make vse of the one fourth part of the Land, neither haue they any settled places, as Townes to dwell in, nor any ground as they challenge for their owne possession, but change their habitation from place to place.

For

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For their Statures, they are a tall and strong limmed People, their colours are tawny, they goe naked, saue onely they are in part couered with Beasts Skins on one of their Shoulders, and weare something before their Priuities: their Haire is generally blacke, and cut before like our Gentlewomen, and one locke longer then the rest, much like to our Gentlemen, which fashion I thinke came from hence into *England*.

For their weapons, they haue Bowes and Arrowes, some of them headed with Bone, and some with Brasse: I haue sent you some of them for an example.

The Men for the most part liue idly, they doe nothing but hunt and fish: their wiues set their Corne and doe all their other worke. They haue little Household stuffe, as a Kettle, and some other Vessels like Trays, Spooones, Dishes and Baskets.

Their Houses are verie little and homely, being made with small Poles pricked into the ground, and so bended and fastned at the tops, and on the sides they are matted with Boughes, & couered on the Roofe with Sedge and old Mats, and for their beds that they take their rest on, they haue a Mat.

They doe generally professe to like well of our comming and planting here; partly because there is abundance of ground that they cannot possesse nor make vse of, and partly because our being here will be a meanes both of reliefe to them when they want, and also a
defence

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defence from their Enemies, wherewith (I say) before this Plantation begun, they were often indangered.

For their Religion, they doe worship two Gods, a good God and an euill God: the good God they call *Tantum*, and their euill God whom they feare will doe them hurt, they call *Squantum*.

For their dealing with vs, we neither feare them nor trust them, for fourtie of our Musketeeres will driue five hundred of them out of the Field. We vse them kindly, they will come into our Houses sometimes by halfe a douzen or halfe a score at a time when we are at victuals, but will aske or take nothing but what we giue them.

We purpose to learne their Language as soone as we can, which will be a meanes to do them good.

*Of the present condition of the Plantation,
and what it is.*

WHen we came first to *Neihum kek*, we found about halfe a score Houses, and a faire House newly built for the Gouvernour, we found also abundance of Corne planted by them, verie good and well likeing. And we brought with vs about two hundred Passengers and Planters more, which by common consent of the old Planters were all combined together into one Body Politicke, vnder the same Gouvernour.

There

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There are in all of vs both old and new Planters about three hundred, whereof two hundred of them are settled at *Nehum-kek*, now called *Salem*: and the rest haue Planted themselves at *Masathulets* Bay, beginning to build a Towne there which we doe call *Cherton*, or *Charles* Towne.

We that are settled at *Salem* make what haste we can to build Houses, so that within a short time we shall haue a faire Towne.

We haue great Ordnance, wherewith we doubt not but we shall fortifie our selues in a short time to keepe out a potent Aduersarie. But that which is our greatest comfort, and meanes of defence aboue all other, is, that we haue here the true Religion and holy Ordinances of Almighty God taught amongst vs: Thanks be to God, we haue here plentie of Preaching, and diligent Catechizing, with strickt and carefull exercise, and good and commendable orders to bring our People into a Christian conuersation with whom we haue to doe withall. And thus we doubt not but God will be with vs, and
*if God be with vs, who can
be against vs?*

FINIS.

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